



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Canes' Scott Darling more at ease, more himself in hockey camp visit

By Chip Alexander

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RALEIGH – Scott Darling looked fully at ease Tuesday during a drop-in visit to Raleigh Center Ice, surprising some young hockey campers.

There was none of the edginess or underlying defensiveness from last season, the goalie's first with the Carolina Hurricanes, when there was a sense he did not have a good fit with his new team. He came across as more extroverted, more himself.

Darling, casually dressed in a white T-shirt, took on some rapid-fire questions from kids at the Canes' summer camp and later from the media -- about superstitions and tattoos, Cam Ward and Petr Mrazek, Bill Peters and Rod Brind'Amour. About his big, bushy beard.

Darling has [owned up to last season](#), that it was a bad one for him, that it hurt the team. He talked again Tuesday of a renewed determination to be much better and prove himself again, of losing 15 pounds and wanting to lose five more before training camp, working out, taking pilates for the first time, boxing, watching what he eats.

"I'm preparing 100 percent better than last year," he said. "I'm confident in my goaltending as a whole. I've proven I can do it and that I can play, and now it's just having that confidence and that foundation.

"To know you worked as hard as you could during the summer to be ready in the season should give me the confidence I need."

He's a Raleigh homeowner now. His girl friend lives with him, he says. There's a dog, a Great Dane named "Moose," for them to care for and feed.

"I have everything together here and feel comfortable now," he said.

There has been much change around him. Peters left after the past season to coach the Calgary Flames and Brind'Amour will be getting his first shot at being a head coach this year. Ward, long the Canes' franchise goalie, left in free agency and Mrazek signed to be the Canes' second goalie.

"I'm excited for Rod. It's great for him get that chance," Darling said. "He gets it. He played, obviously, and had an

amazing career. ... He knows what he's talking about and I'm excited for him to take over."

One of the kids asked Darling, "Are you like the lead goalie now or still the backup?" That cut to the core.

"You know, it's an open competition," Darling said. "We're actually kind of similar goaltenders, aggressive, athletic goalies. So he and I will be duking it out for the No. 1 job."

Darling noted he changes goalie sticks for every game. He said it has nothing to do with superstition, and he would like to go through as many as possible this season after playing in 43 games in 2017-18.

Another part of his every-game routine is ... well, throwing up before the game. If he's starting, he's retching. Butterflies, he said. They never go away.

"It's a big deal to play in the NHL, a lot of pressure to be there for your teammates and fans and coaches," he said. "A lot rides on a goalie. It's nerve-racking every game."

Who knows, a change in nutrition might help that. And the change has not been a small one, he said.

"Last year I ate out every meal," he said. "I get like one cheat meal a week now. My girl friend is awesome, counting my calories and counting my proteins and healthy fats. ... She's vegetarian, so that helps."

It's a lot of organic food, he said. A lot of Coke Zero. "No burgers or things like that," he added.

But eating smarter, working out harder and dropping pounds doesn't always make for better play in net. That has to be proven when training camp begins, when the season begins, when the games count.

Darling was a member of the Chicago Blackhawks' Stanley Cup champions in 2015. The tattoo on his right arm is a visual reminder of his biggest moment in hockey -- a Chicago kid winning the Cup with his hometown team.

The Hurricanes haven't been a part of the Stanley Cup playoffs since 2009. Darling might be tempted to add some new ink if that nine-year drought, the longest in the league, ends this season.

"I think our roster has really improved this year and I think we're actually going to surprise a lot of people," Darling said. "Every team's goal every year is to make the playoffs and see what happens. But I have a lot of faith we're going to make the playoffs. That's where I stand on that."



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NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Playoffs the focus for new Hurricanes defenseman de Haan

Big free agent addition visited Raleigh for the first time since signing with Carolina

July 25, 2018 Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — Other than road trips to Raleigh as a member of the New York Islanders, Calvin de Haan is understandably not yet familiar with the place he'll call home for the next four seasons.

"No. 1 priority is try and find home base for the next few days here, but I'm sure we'll tour around the city as well and go from there," the 27-year-old defenseman said when meeting with media Tuesday in-person for the first time as a member of the Carolina Hurricanes.

The visit will also likely include a few fact-finding stops for his side business: de Haan is part of a group opening Ridge Rock Brewing Company in his hometown of Carp, Ontario.

"My tour guide Mike (Sundheim, Hurricanes vice president of communications) is going to take us to a few at some point, I'm sure," de Haan said.

De Haan was the 12th overall pick in the 2009 NHL Draft by the Islanders and spent his entire pro career with the organization until he signed a four-year, \$18.2 million contract with Carolina as an unrestricted free agent on July 3.

The move brings him to a new city and also a locker room full of new teammates — after signing, de Haan said the only Hurricane he had previously played with was Jeff Skinner at the World Championships for Team Canada.

"A few guys have reached out and did the old, 'Hey, how's it going' text," de Haan said of his new teammates. "It feels nice to be part of a new team and it's always nice to feel welcome as well."

De Haan is joining a rebuilt blueline. Gone are Noah Hanifin and Klas Dahlbeck, and in their place are de Haan and Dougie Hamilton.

"It's going to make my job a lot easier to give the pucks to guys like that," the left-handed de Haan said of playing alongside one of Hamilton or Brett Pesce. "The experts are saying that we have a great blue line, and I don't think they're wrong. I know playing against the Hurricanes for the past few years, it's pretty stingy back there. It's not easy to enter that offensive zone."

In acquiring Hamilton, the Hurricanes added one of the best offensive defensemen in hockey. De Haan, however, was signed to be a stabilizing force in front of goalies Scott Darling and Petr Mrazek.

In 304 career games, he has 12 goals and 69 assists, but he has been a plus player in four of the five seasons he has spent primarily in the NHL. That includes plus-11 in 33 games for the Islanders last season. De Haan's season ended after 33 games, and Isles went on to allow a league-high 296 goals.

"I think I can play some reliable minutes on the back end," de Haan said. "I like to think I slot into the top four as well on the left side. Just steady. I'm not the flashiest guy out there. I always work my tail off and I hate getting scored on, so that's obviously important when you play defense."

Most importantly, de Haan wants to be a part of getting the Hurricanes — mired in a nine-year playoff drought — back to the postseason.

"I've said it a thousand times, but I want to help this team win, to be honest, and we want to get back into the playoffs," de Haan said. "There's a lot of good, young talent here, and I don't see why this team can't make it into the playoffs."



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Tweetmail No. 195: Hype, de Haan in Raleigh & Realignment

by Michael Smith

July 25th, 2018

Hello and welcome to Tweetmail, a weekly feature on CarolinaHurricanes.com in which I take your Twitter questions about the Carolina Hurricanes or other assorted topics and answer them in mailbag form. Hopefully the final product is insightful to some degree, and maybe we have some fun along the way.

Let's get to it.

Hi! Great question. Indeed, a lot has changed in the organization from top to bottom in the last few months.

On-ice, I'm most excited to see Rod Brind'Amour take the reins as head coach. As [Mike Sundheim wrote in early May](#), "In 2005, we got to see the change in our locker room when that A on his sweater turned into a C. Now, we get to see the change as Brind'Amour moves into the office on the end of the hall."

That's the truth. It might not be evident just yet, but once the team trickles back into town in another month, once Brind'Amour blows the first whistle in training camp, once the puck drops on the season, I think that culture shift will become more and more evident.

No one worked harder than Brind'Amour as a player, and he's approached his role in coaching in a similar fashion. Just as it was in 2005, this is his team now. He's going to mold it in his image, an image based on honesty, hard work and a whatever-it-takes attitude - and that's incredibly exciting.

(Let's not forget, too, the revamp of the roster, especially on the blue line. The Canes already boasted one of the league's premier defensive corps, and it only got better.)

Off-ice, I'm most excited to see how this fan base rallies around the team. It's been a long time - too long - since the Canes were last in the playoffs, but that's a drought that's going to end very soon. If this young, talented squad can become what we all believe it can become, it could be a fun season. Fun on the ice will spell fun off the ice, and I can't wait to see how it plays out.

Is it October yet? *checks calendar* Welp. Soon.

Quick backstory for this one: in his media availability on Tuesday at PNC Arena, Hurricanes defenseman [Calvin de Haan](#) was [asked about local beer](#), of course, and said this: "My tour guide, Mike, is going to take us to a few [breweries] at some point, I'm sure." The Mike he was referring to is Mike Sundheim, the Hurricanes vice president of communications and team services.

So, time for a guest #Tweetmail answer! Take it away, Sunny.

"The biggest thing that stood out to me was a refreshing personality. He's a funny guy. It's a long season and when you're building chemistry in a locker room, you want people that everyone enjoys being around. I also got the impression he truly enjoyed his time around Raleigh and is really going to like living in this community. I can easily see Cal turning into a fan favorite here." - Sundheim

This is all hypothetical #fornow, but I don't think we'll have to wait much longer. When they convene in September, the Board of Governors could potentially vote on granting Seattle an expansion team. Whenever said vote happens, it seems very likely that the NHL will have a 32nd franchise in place in the Pacific Northwest in time for the 2020-21 season.

If/when we get there, the league will likely have to juggle divisions. Your idea of eight divisions of four teams is very intriguing, especially with the concept of reuniting the Hurricanes with Washington, Tampa Bay and Florida in a new-age Southeast Division. You could also build a Canadian-heavy division with Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. In the West, how about Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Seattle? And a SoCal division with Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Jose and Vegas? What would the playoff structure look like in either conference - top four divisional teams plus four wild cards? It's intriguing. I suppose it could work.

But, I don't imagine the changes will be that radical. Adding a 32nd team will finally bring balance to the conferences with 16 teams in both the East and West. Assuming division structure remains constant, which seems to be the most likely scenario, the West will need to be tinkered. I'd have to think Seattle will be a Pacific Division team, meaning the Central will need to poach a team from the left coast to balance out the divisions; Arizona in the Central Division might be the most logical solution.

"Brass Bonanza" was indeed submitted as a goal song option, and it was already on our internal list we created earlier in the summer. You can expect to see it among the 6-8 final fan vote options, which will be revealed in the next 7-10 days.

The Canes have had some really strong siren sounders throughout the years. Television play-by-play voice John Forslund always gives it his all. Some [fans have really gotten into it](#). And [majority owner Tom Dundon even gave it a good wind](#) in January.

I'm going to go with the warning siren being an arm day workout in itself. To crank the siren properly and really whip



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the crowd into a frenzy as the team hits the ice, you've got to really lean into the wind.

Then again, arm day with Head Strength and Conditioning Coach Bill Burniston might be pretty challenging. We'll have to ask him on [the podcast](#) one day.

Join me next week for more questions and more answers!

If you have a question you'd like answered or you want to discuss (eight months later) "Coco" and its brilliance, you can find me on Twitter at [@MSmithCanes](#) or drop an email [here](#).



Carolina Hurricanes Revisionist History: The Canes Don't Trade for Jordan Staal

What if the Canes never pulled the trigger on the deal that united Eric and Jordan Staal?

By Brett Finger

On June 21, 2012, a report created waves around the NHL.

According to TSN's Bob McKenzie and Darren Dreger, Pittsburgh Penguins center Jordan Staal turned down a ten-year, \$60 million contract extension with the team.

Though Staal still had another year left on his four-year, \$16 million deal with the Pens, the writing was on the wall for then-Penguins general manager Ray Shero; Staal would not be a Penguin for long.

That "for long" ended up being a little more than one day.

On June 22, 2012, the first night of the 2012 NHL Draft, league commissioner Gary Bettman went to the podium in Consol Energy Center (now PPG Paints Arena) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and said a series of words that I likely won't ever forget hearing on my television:

"We have a trade to announce... And for those of you in the building, you will be particularly interested."

Then, met with a barrage of fan reactions in the arena, it happened.

The Pittsburgh Penguins had traded rising star center Jordan Staal to the Carolina Hurricanes for fellow young centerman Brandon Sutter, defensive prospect Brian Dumoulin, and the eighth-overall pick in the 2012 Draft, which ended up being defenseman Derrick Pouliot.

But what if that never happened? What if the trade that united the Canes' captain with his younger brother never came to fruition?

Let's discuss it.

For starters, there's a good chance that Staal still would have been traded at or shortly after the draft to a team in need of center help. According to then-Hurricanes general manager Jim Rutherford, Shero called him just before 4:30 pm on the day of the draft to tell him that the Pens would trade Staal.

The eventual deal was consummated at 6:45 on that same day.

So, if that would have never happened, it seems like the Penguins were pretty set on selling high on their third-line center who was fresh off of a 25-goal season despite playing a supporting role and missing 20 games due to injury.

A story line through this was that Jordan wanted to play with one of his brothers, so there's still a chance that he would have played the 2012-13 season and hit the free agent market. From there, the Hurricanes likely would have been the clubhouse leader to sign him, especially since he turned down the exact same deal with the Pens that he eventually accepted just a week and a half after getting dealt to the Canes.

Instead of making that assumption, let's say the Hurricanes were never able to get him and the player instead signed a long-term deal elsewhere.

In this situation, Brandon Sutter would have stayed with the team. He was the real centerpiece of the outgoing package from Carolina in the deal, so let's start with him.

Sutter was scheduled to be a restricted free agent after the 2013-14 season, so the Hurricanes were essentially guaranteed another three years of retaining his services before he would have unrestricted free agent rights.

While he was a great two-way player in Carolina, his offensive production has never reached the point it was at in his second season in the league, wherein he netted 21 goals and a career-high 40 points. He had 29 and 32-point years in the next two years in Raleigh before being dealt.

He then went to Pittsburgh and put up more modest numbers before signing in Vancouver where he is now nothing more than a third-line center.

Had he stayed in Carolina, perhaps things would have gone better for him. There was a point where many hoped/thought he would be a great second-line center behind Eric Staal. Maybe he would've been, but his offensive production has never resembled that of a reliable top-six guy, even considering how good he was defensively.



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If he spent a minimum three more years with the Hurricanes, he probably would have floated around the 35-point mark each year while continuing to wear a letter on the front of his jersey.

Brian Dumoulin was an afterthought in the trade, but he has panned out like Pittsburgh hoped. Once a good defensive prospect, the American has since turned into a good, defensively-reliable defenseman for the Pens.

There's no reason to think he couldn't have been that in Carolina. Assuming he had developed the same way, I think it's very unlikely the Canes would have signed Calvin de Haan this offseason. Additionally, perhaps it would have changed the 2014, 2015, and 2016 drafts.

Would the Hurricanes have drafted three left-handed defensemen in as many first rounds if they had Dumoulin? Maybe the Canes would have drafted William Nylander or Nikolaj Ehlers instead of Haydn Fleury in 2014 if they had a strong defensive defenseman in Dumoulin about to break into the NHL.

The final piece of this, and the biggest "what if", is the eighth-overall pick.

The Pens missed pretty badly with that pick as they took Pouliot, a defenseman who was once highly regarded for his offense in the Western Hockey League. He never broke through in Pittsburgh but he seems to have found his comfort zone with Sutter in Vancouver.

Other names that were available for the Hurricanes at eight if they didn't make the trade? Jacob Trouba, Filip Forsberg, Radek Faksa, and Teuvo Teravainen.

The name that was rumored a lot for Carolina was Faksa, who has turned into a good third-line center, but he's nothing special. And, of course, the Hurricanes did eventually get their hands on Teravainen.

The name that sticks out the most is Forsberg. He's probably the best forward from that draft, and I remember watching the draft and hoping that he'd fall to eight, which he did.

There's an alternate universe wherein the Canes take the Swedish winger and, in turn, take a perennial 30-goal scorer.

To double and triple down on this "what if" scenario, what if the Hurricanes had just not traded for Staal, instead kept Sutter and Dumoulin, picked Forsberg with the eighth pick, signed Staal in 2013 free agency, and drafted Nylander or Ehlers in 2014 since they already had Dumoulin? Of course that last point assumes they'd still have a top-ten pick.

There's a real chance that Carolina's top-nine center unit would have been Eric Staal, Jordan Staal, and Brandon Sutter. That would have been pretty solid with Forsberg, Nylander or Ehlers, Jeff Skinner, and company supporting them on the wings.

If the Hurricanes had never traded for Jordan Staal, they may have been better off. They could have turned into a constant playoff threat, and once you're in the playoffs, you never know what could happen. Maybe they'd have another Stanley Cup.

Is all of that likely? No, not at all.

The reasonable way to look at it is that the Hurricanes, without a shadow of a doubt, won the Staal trade. The only player that has stuck in Pittsburgh is Dumoulin. Meanwhile, Sutter and Pouliot both flared out and wound up in Vancouver's rebuild.

At the end of the day, the Carolina Hurricanes have an outstanding player, person, and leader in Jordan Staal. The Canes were in a situation wherein they had an opportunity to get a great player, and they pulled the trigger - which was the right decision.

Everything beyond that is just butterfly effect, but it's fun to think about what could have been.

Perhaps most importantly, had that trade not happened, we likely would have never gotten this awesome piece of hockey history:



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NHL rebuild rankings: Which teams are closest to contending?

Greg Wyshynski

There's been a revolution of candor in NHL rebuilding. Teams ranging from the Buffalo Sabres to the New York Rangers have been up front about the "pain" fans will have to endure as their teams bid adieu to beloved players and stagger through years of losing before rising like a hockey phoenix back to championship glory.

Currently, there are nearly a dozen teams in a rebuilding mode -- although a few of them stubbornly refuse to acknowledge they're in one.

Here is a ranking of the rebuilds, from the teams closest to returning to championship contention to the teams that are furthest from it. All roster and contract info is current as of July 25 and courtesy of Cap Friendly.

1. Carolina Hurricanes

Players 25 and under: 12

NHL players on entry-level contracts (expiry): Sebastian Aho, LW/C (2019); Andrei Svechnikov, RW (2021); Haydn Fleury, D (2019).

Top prospects in system: Svechnikov; Martin Necas, C (AHL); Jake Bean, D (AHL); Julien Gauthier, RW (AHL); Alex Nedeljkovic, G (AHL); Adam Fox, D (NCAA); Jack Drury, C (NCAA).

Draft pick forecast: The Hurricanes own all their picks through the fourth round through 2021.

The strategy: Under former general manager Ron Francis, the strategy was patience to the point of near stasis, as they held on to their draft picks, and a collection of young defensemen were nurtured while the team's offense (which lacked depth at center in particular) sputtered. Don Waddell was part of that management team and has since taken over as general manager under new owner Tom Dundon. At the draft, the team made an aggressive deal for defenseman Dougie Hamilton, trading away Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm.

But mostly, the strategy has been cost-effective and analytical, thanks in part to Eric Tulsy, a former hockey blogger who was recently promoted to vice president of hockey management and strategy for the Hurricanes.

Is it working? If the Hamilton trade is a sign of moves to come, then yes. The anticipated trade of defenseman Justin Faulk for help up front would still leave Carolina with its top four defensemen locked up through 2021. Meanwhile, Aho is a burgeoning offensive star and Svechnikov could be a rock star for this team on the wing after going second overall in the 2018 draft.

Estimated return to relevance: The only two things giving us pause on the Hurricanes' ascension to contender status is Rod Brind'Amour as a novice head coach and a current goaltending tandem of Scott Darling and Petr Mrazek; incredibly, that duo might be a downgrade from last season's awful .897 team save percentage nightmare.

2. Arizona Coyotes

Players 25 and under: 11

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Clayton Keller, LW (2020); Lawson Crouse, LW (2019); Dylan Strome, C (2020); Brendan Perlini, LW (2019); Christian Dvorak, C (2019); Christian Fischer, RW (2020); Jakob Chychrun, D (2019).

Top prospects in system: Pierre-Olivier Joseph, D (QMJHL); Nick Merkley, C (AHL); Barrett Hayton, C (OHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Coyotes own all their picks through the fourth round through 2021, as well as the Blackhawks' third-rounder next season.

The strategy: GM John Chayka has utilized the Coyotes' limited advantages to build his roster. He has boldly used his draft choices on surprise selections (Keller at seventh overall in 2016, Hayton at fifth overall in 2018) and in one significant trade that netted him center Derek Stepan and goalie Antti Raanta from the Rangers for a package that included young defenseman Anthony DeAngelo and the seventh overall pick in 2017. He has leveraged his cap space as an asset: Stepan and defenseman Niklas Hjalmarsson (acquired in a trade from Chicago) were essentially cap casualties, while he also snagged picks and prospects for taking on the dead weight contracts of players like Pavel Datsyuk, Dave Bolland, Chris Pronger and most recently Marian Hossa.

The strategy has now shifted slightly to long-term contention, with free-agent additions (Michael Grabner) and inking franchise players (Oliver-Ekman Larsson, signed through 2027), and flipping assets for other needs (the Max Domi for Alex Galchenyuk deal) while, for the most part, refusing to deal from a collection of other solid prospects.

But the biggest virtue here for Chayka has been patience, both thanks to ownership -- which hopefully continues even as Andrew Barroway seeks to sell half his share -- and the media marketplace, which is demanding but not the pressure cooker that, say, Toronto or Philadelphia can be.

Is it working? Mostly. The Coyotes posted the same standings points share (.427) in back-to-back seasons but dropped from sixth to eighth in their division. The success in the conference isn't there -- the Coyotes have missed the playoffs for six straight seasons -- but on paper, this team seems to be building toward a collection of vets in their prime and promising young talents meshing together. Hopefully



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they will play in front of a healthy goaltender, unlike last season.

Estimated return to relevance: A playoff berth in 2018-19 isn't out of the question. Another .427 points share might warrant some deep self-reflection, however.

3. New York Rangers

Players 25 and under: 9

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Neal Pionk, D (2019); Anthony DeAngelo, D (2019); Pavel Buchnevich, LW/RW (2019).

Top prospects in system: Filip Chytil, C (AHL); Lias Andersson, C (AHL); Brett Howden, C (WHL); Vitali Kravtsov, RW (KHL); Igor Shestyorin, G (KHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Rangers have all of their draft picks through the first four rounds through the next three seasons, as well as a conditional second-round pick from the Lightning in 2019.

The strategy: Rangers president Glen Sather and GM Jeff Gorton declared to fans that the team was going to go into a rebuild that would cost them some beloved players, and the Rangers (checks notes) went into a rebuild that cost them beloved players. Huh, go figure. Shouldn't they be the ones offering five prospects and a \$12 million-per-season contract for Erik Karlsson?

Of course, it helps when there's already a decent core of players approaching or in their primes: center Mika Zibanejad, left wing Chris Kreider, right wing Jesper Fast, left wing Jimmy Vesey and defensemen Kevin Shattenkirk and Brady Skjei. Not to mention Henrik Lundqvist, who can still be a deciding factor even later in his career.

Is it working? They jury's out until the Rangers see what they have in players like Chytil and Andersson, and Rangers fans see how deep this additional roster reshaping could go (like a potential Mats Zuccarello deal).

Estimated return to relevance: If the young'uns play beyond expectations and new coach David Quinn has the goods, the Rangers might creep back into the playoffs this season.

4. Buffalo Sabres

Players 25 and under: 12

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Tage Thompson, RW (2020); Rasmus Dahlin D, (2021); Casey Mittelstadt, C (2020).

Top prospects in system: Dahlin; Brendan Guhle, D (AHL); Victor Olofsson, LW (AHL); Alexander Nylander, LW/RW (AHL); Rasmus Asplund, C (AHL); Marcus Davidsson, C (SHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Sabres own all their picks through Round 4 through 2021 except for their 2019 fourth-rounder and potentially their 2019 third-rounder, which Pittsburgh could receive conditionally. The Sabres own conditional first-round picks from the Sharks and Blues in 2019, and a fourth-rounder from the Sharks in 2019.

The strategy: The concept of "a rebuild inside of a rebuild" is one Leonardo DiCaprio and a perpetually spinning top away from a hockey "Inception," but it is Sabres GM Jason Botterill's task in Buffalo. GM Tim Murray, who was crafting a roster around star center Jack Eichel after tanking during his draft year, was turfed. Botterill arrived to figure out what worked, what didn't and how to fix it.

What worked? Murray's drafts were pretty strong, so Botterill inherited a collection of prospects that included a potential Calder winner next season in the dynamic Mittelstadt. Then the team lucked out, won the lottery and added franchise defenseman Dahlin last month.

What didn't? The supporting cast around Eichel wasn't deep enough, the defense wasn't good enough and Robin Lehner was Murray's guy in goal, not Botterill's.

How to fix it? By shipping disgruntled center Ryan O'Reilly to St. Louis for three roster players, by adding former Penguins in Conor Sheary, Scott Wilson and Matt Hunwick, and by signing Carter Hutton as the veteran goaltending mentor to promising Linus Ullmark. And in the process, hoping to get some forward momentum for the franchise in Botterill's second year at the helm.

Is it working? There's no question the Sabres have some promising planks in their foundation. With the addition of Dahlin, they have the essential ingredients for contention: two top centers (Eichel, Mittelstadt), a clear No. 1 defenseman (Dahlin) and a goalie (Ullmark). And Botterill has the luxury of adding a young supporting cast around them rather than the route Murray took (where art thou, Matt Moulson?).

Estimated return to relevance: That .378 points share in 2017-18 was extreme regression, hence the rebuild inside a rebuild. But there's no reason this team shouldn't be squatting in the playoff bubble in the next two seasons and be a contender in three years given its draft pick situation -- provided coach Phil Housley can make it all work.

5. Vancouver Canucks

Players 25 and under: 11

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Brock Boeser, RW (2019); Adam Gaudette, C (2020).

Top prospects in system: Elias Pettersson, C (SHL); Thatcher Demko, G (AHL); Olli Juolevi, D (Liiga); Kole Lind, RW (AHL); Jonathan Dahlen, LW (AHL); Quinn Hughes, D (NCAA).

Draft pick forecast: The Canucks own all of their picks for the next three seasons.

The strategy: After years of clawing to mediocre contender status -- remember that Radim Vrbata signing? -- the Canucks finally acknowledged their lot in life and began preparing for a post-Sedin twins existence, which began in earnest last season when young stars Bo Horvat and Boeser began getting top-line ice time. They'll be joined soon by Pettersson, who is considered one of the top offensive prospects in hockey.

The rest of the roster is, well, seemingly primed to struggle through one more season before the uptick back to



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postseason contention. Or does the fact that the Canucks' only major additions this offseason were fourth-liners Jay Beagle and Antoine Roussel indicate something different for you?

Is it working? Slowly but surely, yes. The Canucks are amassing an impressive collection of young players through solid drafting and some shrewd trades (like snagging Dahlen from Ottawa for Alex Burrows). Boeser was a Calder finalist. Pettersson projects to be one too. They have two solid goalie prospects in Demko and Michael DiPietro.

Estimated return to relevance: Give them another year in the tank, potentially dealing away veterans like Alexander Edler, and then give the kids some help in their pursuit of a playoff berth. And by that we mean "help beyond adding grinders to the fourth line."

6. Montreal Canadiens

Players 25 and under: 13

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Nikita Scherbak, RW (2019); Artturi Lehkonen, LW/RW (2019); Noah Juulsen, D (2020); Victor Mete, D (2020).

Top prospects in system: Jesperi Kotkaniemi, C (Liiga); Ryan Poehling, C (NCAA); Jack Evans, C (NCAA).

Draft pick forecast: The Canadiens own their draft picks through the fourth round over the next three years, as well as fourth-round picks from Calgary (2019) and Winnipeg (2020).

The strategy: Denial.

The Canadiens are a team with:

- A superstar goalie in Carey Price who is turning 31 in August
- A star defenseman in Shea Weber turning 33 in August who just underwent two surgeries in the span of four months
- A roster with a gaping hole at center
- A cloud of uncertainty hanging over their star top-line winger (and captain) Max Pacioretty, who has one year left on his contract and turns 30 in November

Yes, it's true they're going to be a bit younger, and landing Kotkaniemi in the draft might give the Canadiens the center that has eluded them. (He has been compared to everyone from Ryan O'Reilly to Anze Kopitar.) But look no further than Cayden Primeau and Charlie Lindgren as the encapsulation of Montreal's plight: They're arguably two of the team's top 10 prospects (even though Lindgren is 24), but they're both goalies and therefore stuck behind a guy signed through 2026 at \$10.5 million against the cap.

Is it working? Clearly, as Marc Bergevin still has a job, and wouldn't he have been unceremoniously fired by now were this not the case? Um, right? Anyone? Is this thing on?

Estimated return to relevance: Montreal had a division title sandwiched between two sixth-place finishes. And it should come as no surprise that Price was healthy in that sandwiched season and was not in the other two campaigns.

A healthy Price, Claude Julien behind the bench and some tenacious players up front could get the Canadiens a sniff of the playoffs next season, if missing Weber until December doesn't submarine them.

But Stanley Cup contention is only going to happen if Montreal takes another leap back for a high draft pick, smartly parlaying Pacioretty into future assets and plays the long game despite the age of its star players. A few more smart moves -- like utilizing cap space to acquire Joel Armia from Winnipeg through a Steve Mason buyout -- wouldn't hurt, either.

7. New York Islanders

Players 25 and under: 6

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Mathew Barzal, C (2019); Anthony Beauvillier, LW (2019).

Top prospects in system: Ilya Sorokin, G (KHL); Josh Ho-Sang, RW (AHL); Kieffer Bellows, LW; (AHL); Linus Soderstrom, G (Sweden); Devon Toews, D (AHL); Oliver Wahlstrom, RW (USHL); Noah Dobson, D (QMJHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Islanders own all their picks in the first four rounds in 2020 and 2021 but don't have their own picks in Rounds 2-4 in 2019. They do own Calgary's second-rounder in 2019.

The strategy: Imagine a dining room with an absolutely resplendent wooden table as the centerpiece. Imagine purchasing the glass wear and the flatware and all the other trappings, all in service of that glorious sturdy table. And just as you're about to tie the room together, you discover the wooden table has left for Toronto because that's where its roots are.

Imagine no more and gaze upon the Islanders, whose strategy shifted the moment John Tavares chose to leave for the Maple Leafs. The Islanders still have a number of promising young players, especially Barzal. They still have two goalies of the future, although when one of them finally comes over from Russia remains a bit of a mystery. They have a new general manager in Lou Lamoriello, whose arrival included a quite successful 2018 draft class for the Isles. (And who will be tasked with reshaping the veteran aspects of the roster, especially on the blue line.) They have a Stanley Cup-winning coach in Barry Trotz. They have many things to be optimistic about ...

... in the long run. For now, the team appears prepared to take a significant leap back for a season. Lamoriello's reaction to Tavares' leaving was a hasty scramble for veteran free agents and getting Matt Martin back to reunite a fabled fourth line. Take a breather. Pray for Jack Hughes. And go undefeated against the Leafs, obviously.

Is it working? C'mon, this is like a kid asking "Are we there yet?" 10 minutes into a five-hour car ride. Ask us after the 2019 draft lottery.

Estimated return to relevance: During Mat Barzal's next contact with the Islanders, because if it's not with the Islanders, hoo-boy ...

8. Detroit Red Wings



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Players 25 and under: 5

NHL players on ELCs: None

Top prospects in system: Michael Rasmussen, C (WHL); Filip Zadina, RW (QMJHL); Dennis Cholowski, D (WHL); Filip Hronek, D (AHL); Evgeny Svechnikov, RW (AHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Red Wings own all their picks through the fourth round in the next three drafts, and own the Islanders' second-round pick in 2019 and the Golden Knights' third-rounder in 2020.

The strategy: Let us know when you locate one.

The Red Wings missed the playoffs in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1983. That futility ended the following season when Steve Yzerman arrived in Motown, but there isn't anything resembling that kind of transformative player on the Red Wings' roster or in their system. The Gustav Nyquist generation has yielded to the Dylan Larkin generation, which will yield to the Rasmussen and Zadina generation up front.

But the foundational defenseman the Red Wings have been seeking since the retirement of Nicklas Lidstrom still eludes them. At the very least, coach Jeff Blashill has said he will defer to younger players when it comes to ice time if a roster spot is between a newbie and a veteran. "I say that because we need different results, and part of having different results is improving internally, and that can come with new guys being in spots," he told the Detroit Free Press.

Is it working? It's a roster with more players older than 34 (six) than under the age of 24 (five), so to call this a team in transition would be putting it mildly. It's also a team that currently has \$2.828 million in cap space and has entrusted the general manager who got them in this pickle (Ken Holland) with getting them out of it.

Estimated return to relevance: This is a team that needs to get worse before it gets better, purging the roster of veterans and cap space, and then hoping a combination of the draft and shrewd veteran acquisitions can position it as a contender. But the current management hasn't inspired much confidence to that end. There's way too much loyalty to veterans past their expiration date or, failing that, an overvaluing of them.

9. Ottawa Senators

Players 25 and under: 6

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Colin White, C (2019); Christian Wolanin, D (2019); Thomas Chabot, D (2020).

Top prospects in system: Logan Brown, C (OHL); Drake Batherson, C (CHL); Filip Chlapik, C (AHL); Brady Tkachuk, LW (NCAA); Filip Gustavsson, G (AHL).

Draft pick forecast: The Senators have all of their draft picks through the first four rounds over the next three seasons ... except their first-round pick and third-round picks in 2019, which is very "ouch." They own the Penguins' third-rounder in 2019 and the Blue Jackets' third-rounder in 2020.

The strategy: There are many things in life for which an instruction manual does not exist. To that list we can add: There is no instruction manual for coming within a goal of the

Stanley Cup Final in double-overtime of a conference final Game 7; trading both a top-two center and a first-round pick to acquire a star center with a desire to escape his team's alleged rebuild; and then descending into a massive rebuild themselves marked by off-ice scandal and the near certainty that a franchise defenseman will be traded before he leaves of his own accord. Oh, and the team owner is perhaps the most hated man in the NHL who doesn't have a desk in the league front office.

Where were we ... ah, yes, strategy. The Erik Karlsson trade, and whatever it yields, will help establish some semblance of strategy, one assumes. Because the typical path back to respectability -- trade a star, bottom out and resurface with a lottery pick of a franchise player -- is a road that leads to Denver, where the Senators' pick next season resides.

Is it working? Ottawa isn't a complete wasteland. There are still Mark Stone and Cody Ceci. White and Brown will be game-changers, and Chabot was named MVP of the 2017 World Junior Championship despite playing for the silver-medal team. Gustavsson, whom GM Pierre Dorion snagged in the Derick Brassard sell-off, is a goalie of the future. And Tkachuk, whenever he arrives, should be great. But the success of whatever plan Dorion has for the team all depends on what trading Karlsson nets the Senators, and what baggage (re: Bobby Ryan's contract) Ottawa manages to hitch to him.

Estimated return to relevance: Right around when Eugene Melnyk gets that downtown arena.

Should they rebuild?

Anaheim Ducks

Players 25 and under: 6

NHL players on ELCs: None.

Draft pick forecast: The Ducks have all of their picks, save for a third- and seventh-rounder in 2019.

Should they rebuild? The good news is that their outstanding defense and goalie John Gibson are all under the age of 27. The bad news is that Ryan Getzlaf, Corey Perry and Ryan Kesler are all over the age of 33. That said, we give the Ducks a small window in which they could win ... although Kesler's fragility is a concern.

Chicago Blackhawks

Players 25 and under: 8

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Nick Schmaltz, C (2019); Dylan Sikura, C (2019); David Kampf, RW (2019); Victor Ejdsell, C (2019); Alex DeBrincat, RW (2020).

Draft pick forecast: The Blackhawks have all their picks through the first four rounds over the next three seasons, save for their third-rounder in 2019. They also own Boston's fourth-round pick in 2019.

Should they rebuild? They sorta are? Absent any other options because of the salary cap and a legion of no-move clauses, the Blackhawks have attempted to build a supporting cast for well-compensated veterans like Jonathan Toews, Patrick Kane, Duncan Keith and Brent Seabrook with younger and cheaper labor. The hope is that a healthy Corey



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Crawford can get the Blackhawks another crack at a championship. The reality is that GM Stan Bowman should do whatever is necessary to purge players like Seabrook and Artem Anisimov and use that cap space to really bolster the roster. Hey, we hear Artemi Panarin might be available next summer ...

Minnesota Wild

Players 25 and under: 7

NHL players on ELCs (expiry): Jordan Greenway, LW (2020); Joel Eriksson Ek, C (2020).

Draft pick forecast: The Wild have all of their picks for the next three years, save for their fourth-rounder in 2019, which is owned by the Coyotes.

Should they rebuild? GM Paul Fenton has been tasked with "tweaking" rather than rebuilding this roster. While the Wild don't necessarily need to go into the tank, these "tweaks" probably need to go beyond a cosmetic change into something a bit more fundamental.



De Haan optimistic on Hurricanes' playoff chances

TSN.ca Staff

The Carolina Hurricanes own the NHL's longest active playoff drought at nine seasons, but Calvin de Haan believes there is reason for optimism this year.

"We've heard good things about the area," de Haan told [The Raleigh News and Observer](#) of his decision to sign in Carolina. "It seems like a great place to live. I like the direction that the team's going.

"I've said this before that the Hurricanes over the past few years and during my time in the NHL I think they've underachieved. I want to be part of the solution to get this team into the playoffs."

The Hurricanes revamped their defence this summer, signing de Haan to a four-year deal and adding Dougie Hamilton.

The new duo will join returnees Jaccob Slavin, Brett Pesce, Justin Faulk, and Trevor van Riemsdyk on the team's blueline, which general manager Don Waddell said he believes will rank among the top groups in the league.

De Haan was limited to just 33 games last season due to a shoulder injury, but believes he'll be able to fill a top-four role on the Hurricanes this season. With just 12 goals in 304 career NHL games, the 27-year-old said he's looking forward to playing alongside an offensive defenceman such as

Hamilton, who was tied for the league lead among blueliners with 17 goals last season.

"It's going to make my job a lot easier to give the puck to guys like that," de Haan said. "All the experts are saying that we have a great blueline, and I don't think they're wrong. I know [from] playing against the Hurricanes for the past few years [that] it's pretty stingy back there. It's not easy to enter that offensive zone."

Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon said prior to the off-season that the team wanted to change their culture this summer. They have since hired a new head coach in Rod Brind'Amour, traded Elias Lindholm and Noah Hanifin and added goaltender Petr Mrazek. [NHL.com](#) projects the Hurricanes could have as many as 10 faces on their bench this season.

De Haan said he believes the Hurricanes, who missed the playoffs by 14 points last season, have the necessary pieces to end their playoff drought.

"I kind of want to isolate myself on that back end as a top-four guy. That's basically it," de Haan said. "I want to be out there, block shots, kill penalties and help this team - I've said it a thousand times - but I want to help this team win, to be honest, and we want to get back into the playoffs."

"There's a lot of good, young talent here, and I don't see why this team can't make it into the playoffs."



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De Haan ready to win with Hurricanes

New defenseman says Carolina, which has missed playoffs nine straight seasons, 'underachieved'

by Kurt Dusterberg

July 25th, 2018

RALEIGH, N.C. -- [Calvin de Haan](#) wants to win now.

And the 27-year-old defenseman, who signed a four-year, \$18.2 million contract (\$4.55 million average annual value) with the Carolina Hurricanes on July 3, made it clear Tuesday that he feels they are ready to win despite missing the Stanley Cup Playoffs the past nine seasons.

"I like the direction the team is going," said de Haan, who played his first five NHL seasons with the New York Islanders. "The Hurricanes, during my time in the NHL, I think they've underachieved. I want to be part of the solution to get this team into the playoffs.

"I'm actually pretty pumped. I'm very excited to be here. This team is good."

The Hurricanes added de Haan and defenseman Dougie Hamilton, who arrived via a trade with the Calgary Flames, to an already solid group that includes [Justin Faulk](#), [Brett Pesce](#), [Jacob Slavin](#) and [Trevor van Riemsdyk](#).

"All the experts say this blue line is pretty legit," de Haan said. "Being able to pass the puck to some of these guys is going to make my job and life a lot easier on the ice. That's something that really came into account."

The Hurricanes were 36-35-11 last season, 14 points behind the New Jersey Devils for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference.

"Our team, and Calvin said it, we've gone a long time without making the playoffs, but our team is on the rise," Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell said July 3. "Calvin, [Dougie Hamilton](#), these type of players will make us a better hockey club."

De Haan was limited to 33 games last season because of a shoulder injury sustained Dec. 16. He finished fourth in the NHL with 190 blocked shots in 2016-17. The left-handed shooter, selected by the Islanders in the first round (No. 12) of the 2009 NHL Draft, has 81 points (12 goals, 69 assists) and 687 blocked shots in 304 NHL games.

"I've always just kind of done it, to be honest," he said of blocking shots. "There's times where you've got to stand in front of one-timers. That doesn't feel good. But you can make it a key play in the game and it can boost your team. You see guys doing that, it's a good feeling. It shows they want to get that two points."

De Haan played with Hurricanes forward [Jeff Skinner](#) at the 2017 IIHF World Championship but otherwise knew no one on Carolina's roster. In the days leading up to the start of free agency July 1, de Haan was generating a lot of interest, but not from the Hurricanes.

"Sometimes it was overwhelming because we did have a ton of teams call," de Haan said. "A lot of teams wanted to see how I was doing with my shoulder. After that, it sort of fizzled out for a while.

"We didn't even think Carolina was going to call. But here I am, a Carolina Hurricane."

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article215445520.html>

<http://njonline.com/article/2018/07/playoffs-the-focus-for-new-hurricanes-defenseman-de-haan/>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/tweetmail-number-195-hype-calvin-de-haan-raleigh-realignment/c-299586574>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2018/7/25/17600734/alternate-history-carolina-hurricanes-dont-trade-for-jordan-staal-brandon-sutter-filip-forsberg>

http://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/24129330/nhl-ranking-nhl-best-locked-young-core-talent-groups

<https://www.tsn.ca/de-haan-optimistic-on-hurricanes-playoff-chances-1.1147422>

<https://www.nhl.com/news/calvin-de-haan-ready-to-win-with-carolina-hurricanes/c-299587300>



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SportScan

Articles from outlets covering the Hurricanes' upcoming opponents and league-wide news

1102345 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes' Scott Darling more at ease, more himself in hockey camp visit

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Scott Darling looked fully at ease Tuesday during a drop-in visit to Raleigh Center Ice, surprising some young hockey campers.

There was none of the edginess or underlying defensiveness from last season, the goalie's first with the Carolina Hurricanes, when there was a sense he did not have a good fit with his new team. He came across as more extroverted, more himself.

Darling, casually dressed in a white T-shirt, took on some rapid-fire questions from kids at the Canes' summer camp and later from the media -- about superstitions and tattoos, Cam Ward and Petr Mrazek, Bill Peters and Rod Brind'Amour. About his big, bushy beard.

Darling has owned up to last season, that it was a bad one for him, that it hurt the team. He talked again Tuesday of a renewed determination to be much better and prove himself again, of losing 15 pounds and wanting to lose five more before training camp, working out, taking pilates for the first time, boxing, watching what he eats.

"I'm preparing 100 percent better than last year," he said. "I'm confident in my goaltending as a whole. I've proven I can do it and that I can play, and now it's just having that confidence and that foundation."

"To know you worked as hard as you could during the summer to be ready in the season should give me the confidence I need."

He's a Raleigh homeowner now. His girl friend lives with him, he says. There's a dog, a Great Dane named "Moose," for them to care for and feed.

"I have everything together here and feel comfortable now," he said.

There has been much change around him. Peters left after the past season to coach the Calgary Flames and Brind'Amour will be getting his first shot at being a head coach this year. Ward, long the Canes' franchise goalie, left in free agency and Mrazek signed to be the Canes' second goalie.

"I'm excited for Rod. It's great for him get that chance," Darling said. "He gets it. He played, obviously, and had an amazing career. ... He knows what he's talking about and I'm excited for him to take over."

One of the kids asked Darling, "Are you like the lead goalie now or still the backup?" That cut to the core.

"You know, it's an open competition," Darling said. "We're actually kind of similar goaltenders, aggressive, athletic goalies. So he and I will be duking it out for the No. 1 job."

Darling noted he changes goalie sticks for every game. He said it has nothing to do with superstition, and he would like to go through as many as possible this season after playing in 43 games in 2017-18.

Another part of his every-game routine is ... well, throwing up before the game. If he's starting, he's retching. Butterflies, he said. They never go away.

"It's a big deal to play in the NHL, a lot of pressure to be there for your teammates and fans and coaches," he said. "A lot rides on a goalie. It's nerve-racking every game."

Who knows, a change in nutrition might help that. And the change has not been a small one, he said.

"Last year I ate out every meal," he said. "I get like one cheat meal a week now. My girl friend is awesome, counting my calories and counting my proteins and healthy fats. ... She's vegetarian, so that helps."

It's a lot of organic food, he said. A lot of Coke Zero. "No burgers or things like that," he added.

But eating smarter, working out harder and dropping pounds doesn't always make for better play in net. That has to be proven when training camp begins, when the season begins, when the games count.

Darling was a member of the Chicago Blackhawks' Stanley Cup champions in 2015. The tattoo on his right arm is a visual reminder of his biggest moment in hockey -- a Chicago kid winning the Cup with his hometown team.

The Hurricanes haven't been a part of the Stanley Cup playoffs since 2009. Darling might be tempted to add some new ink if that nine-year drought, the longest in the league, ends this season.

"I think our roster has really improved this year and I think we're actually going to surprise a lot of people," Darling said. "Every team's goal every year is to make the playoffs and see what happens. But I have a lot of faith we're going to make the playoffs. That's where I stand on that."

News Observer LOADED: 07.26.2018

1102400 Websites

The Athletic / T.J. Oshie returns to his Warroad roots again, this time with the Stanley Cup

By Jess Myers Jul 25, 2018 19

WARROAD, Minn. — In the summer of 2002, Tim Oshie and his son T.J., then a rising high-school sophomore, made a journey halfway across the country. They brought with them most of their worldly possessions, to a little town on the shore of Lake of the Woods. For T.J., it was a chance to make a new start as a student and a hockey player in a place where his ancestors had lived, but was far, far away from suburban Seattle, the only home he'd known.

On a summer morning in 2018, Tim and T.J. made a return trip to that same little town to say thank you. This time they traveled by chartered jet, and brought with them the Stanley Cup. Where 16 years ago they had found a temporary home with a relative in Warroad, this time they



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were greeted by the town's mayor (a minority owner of the Minnesota Wild) and an entourage of police and fire trucks. They were ferried to The Gardens arena via the same 1933 Lincoln limousine that once transported Franklin Delano Roosevelt to campaign stops.

In most small Minnesota towns where hockey is an important part of the culture, a youth team winning a state title — as the Warroad PeeWee A team did in March — would be the caper to a fantastic season. In Warroad that feat came a few weeks after native daughter Gigi Marvin had brought a gold medal home from the Winter Olympics as a member of Team USA. And it came a few weeks before former Warroad High School star Kobe Roth won an NCAA title with Minnesota Duluth.

But all those feats took a back seat in early June, when T.J. and the Washington Capitals dispatched the Vegas Golden Knights in five games, and Oshie became the first of the seven Warroad H.S. graduates who have skated in the NHL to win the game's top prize.

THE #STANLEYCUP AND TJ OSHIE HAVE ARRIVED AT WARROAD INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL AIRPORT
PIC.TWITTER.COM/GSTR9YENK4

— TIM CAMPBELL (@TIMNHL) JULY 24, 2018

Barely 10 days earlier, Oshie had announced in a national TV interview that his day with the Cup would include a visit to Warroad — widely known as "Hockeytown U.S.A." for decades before a Detroit advertising agency lifted the nickname — on July 24. It set off a scramble of activity by the locals, who put in countless volunteer hours to arrange every detail and set up the rink to accommodate the most revered trophy in sports. Interestingly, it was the Cup's second visit to the shore of Lake of the Woods, after the 1907 Kenora Thistles held the trophy for a few months that year.

By the time the Oshie family arrived from the Twin Cities, where T.J. and his wife Lauren now live with their two young daughters, a capacity crowd of more than 2,000 (more than the town's population) had packed the rink with the front rows filled — at T.J.'s request — by every Warroad youth hockey player, from the tiny mites on up to the most recent high school teams. He had made two requests for his trip to Warroad with the Cup: he wanted every youth hockey player in town to get a picture with the trophy, and he wanted to take Lord Stanley's Cup for a whip.

The heart of downtown Warroad, near the Canadian National railroad tracks and Highway 11, is roughly a mile from the mouth of the Warroad River, where it meets Lake of the Woods at a point with a beach and public boat ramps. For generations, bored small town kids have passed the time — once they have their drivers' license, or know a friend with wheels — by "taking a whip" from downtown to the beach and back.

At the rink, Oshie was greeted by a Native American drum ceremony, honoring his roots. He then spoke for a few minutes, pointing to the far end of the arena and designating that as the spot where he perfected the shootout moves that he'd later use six times against Sergei Bobrovsky and Team Russia in the 2014 Winter Olympics. (Editor's note: The author, a Warroad graduate, emceed the ceremony at The Gardens.)

YEP, THIS IS PRETTY COOL. @WHOCKEYTOWNUSA @CAPITALS
#STANLEYCUP PIC.TWITTER.COM/IRLFHX9KAL

— JESS MYERS (@JESSRMYERS) JULY 24, 2018

He also recalled those first formative trips to Warroad when he was a pre-teen. Oshie was a natural athlete and excelled in youth hockey and basketball when they lived in Everett, Washington. With ice time scarce in the sprawling Seattle suburbs, Tim and T.J. would spend hours each night in traffic, shuttling between school and basketball practice, then to hockey, sometimes getting home past midnight. When visiting Warroad they would stay with Tim's cousin Henry Boucha, who was a high school hockey legend in 1969 for the Warriors, before playing nearly 500 games in the NHL. Henry had an outdoor rink, which he admits was more of a flooded garden with railroad ties on the edges and lights strung from two-by-fours, but T.J. would skate there at all hours of the day and night.

"There was one time I couldn't sleep and I remember going out and putting on my skates and skating on his rink from about 4 until 6 a.m. before everyone woke up," said T.J. recalling the roots of their eventual move to Warroad. "And that's still, to this day, maybe my best childhood memory."

As a freshman, Oshie made the J.V. basketball team at Cascade High School in Everett, while still playing hockey as much as he could. That's when things came to a head for him, athletically. Oshie recalls the Cascade basketball coach called the boy into the office and asked him to make a choice: he could concentrate on basketball or hockey, but not both. Oshie said thank you, took off his basketball jersey, handed it to the coach, and quietly walked out the door. A year later he and his father made the 1,500-mile move to Warroad. Less than a year after that, in the spring of 2003, Oshie was celebrating a state high school title at Xcel Energy Center as a member of the Warriors' top line.

In three seasons with Warroad, Oshie experienced nearly as many state titles (two) as losses (five) and was plucked by St. Louis in the first round of the 2005 draft. He made a trio of Frozen Four trips in his three seasons at North Dakota, then skated seven seasons with the Blues before being traded to Washington in the summer of 2015.

He thanked Boucha from the stage on Tuesday, but it was noted that Henry was not Warroad's first star player. Before him, brothers Bill and Roger Christian from Warroad were the offensive catalysts when Team USA claimed its first gold medal at the 1960 Winter Olympics. And before them, Warroad made its first state tournament trip in 1948, falling to Eveleth in the title game despite the efforts of a senior who once scored a state record 12 goals in a game. His name was Max Oshie.

TJ OSHIE AND GIGI MARVIN POSING WITH THE SPOILS OF THEIR VICTORIES IN FRONT OF WARROAD'S ICONIC WATER TOWER.
#STANLEYCUP #OLYMPICGOLD PIC.TWITTER.COM/JE7V0YKS6C

— TIM CAMPBELL (@TIMNHL) JULY 24, 2018

Before leaving the rink, T.J. had his picture taken holding the Cup aloft in front of a mural that depicts great uncle Max in a Warriors sweater from 1948. Then they took a whip, stopping at a few watering holes, and getting a picture in front of the town's water tower, which is permanently emblazoned with painted hockey sticks. T.J. held the Cup, and Marvin stood next to him with an Olympic gold medal around her neck. Just two 2005 Warroad H.S. graduates with some interesting accomplishments to discuss at their next class reunion. The Oshies flew back to the Twin Cities just past noon, spending the rest of their day with the Cup at home, and in the big city, but not before he left some words of wisdom behind for this town's next generation of hockey players.

"I want to leave you a couple words of advice that I learned from my family and my dad and coaches," T.J. said. "First is to work hard, challenge yourself and always treat people the right way. Always, always have fun. Hockey has never felt like a job to me, and if it did, I don't think I'd have been able to be standing here before you today. With all the state championships and section championships and gold medals that this town has, now a Stanley Cup, there's no doubt that Warroad truly is Hockeytown U.S.A."

T.J. OSHIE LETTING FANS DRINK OUT OF THE CUP AT
@IZZYS_LOUNGE PIC.TWITTER.COM/8C4ORXPSST

— BRAD E. SCHLOSSMAN (@SCHLOSSMANGF) JULY 24, 2018

The Athletic LOADED: 07.26.2018

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Sportsnet.ca / Linden parts with Canucks as team reaps rewards of his leadership



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet July 26, 2018, 12:00 AM

VANCOUVER — The day that Trevor Linden became the Vancouver Canucks' president of hockey operations, an old acquaintance approached him after his introductory press conference at Rogers Arena and chided: "You fool."

And Linden instantly understood the admonishment, which was equal parts good-natured barb and truth.

Linden is — maybe was — hockey royalty on the West Coast, a beloved Canuck deity rivalled in franchise history only by former coach and general manager Pat Quinn.

The Canuck team he was inheriting from fired general manager Mike Gillis was motoring towards a cliff's edge, accelerator pushed to the floor. The Canucks, after a decade-long run of superiority in the National Hockey League, had become dangerously old and stale and, as the draft had long been a black hole for the organization, there were almost no elite prospects in the development pipeline to replace the aging core. Only a handful of the existing players possessed trade value and nearly all of them had trade restrictions in their contracts.

And this was happening in a frenzied market accustomed to success, and with local owners who demand it.

Things were going to get a lot worse for the Canucks. Linden, like everyone, could see this.

Four years and three months later, having navigated the Canucks' nadir, overhauling the organization and building the deepest stockpile of prospects since the team entered the NHL in 1970, all while enduring the media blast furnace daily, Linden abruptly left the organization Wednesday to return to civilian life.

The Canucks' press release announcing his departure — one month after the draft, seven weeks before training camp — was headlined:

'Vancouver Canucks and Trevor Linden amicably agree to part ways.'

We're not sure about "amicably," especially after managing partner Francesco Aquilini's 12-part explanation on Twitter included this ninth chapter: "A rebuild is a long, slow, gradual process. Everybody needs to be united behind the same vision and pulling in the same direction."

So, the Aquilini family didn't share Linden's vision? They clashed ideologically?

The owners want to win now; Linden has been preaching patience in the Canucks' rebuild since he first uttered the R-word two seasons ago. Linden wasn't worried about winning next season; the owners are.

But whatever the optics, the Aquilini family gave Linden time and latitude to rebuild the Canucks and revolutionize their scouting and player development departments, and are invested enough in the rebuild that Linden's hand-picked general manager, Jim Benning, was signed to a three-year contract extension last winter.

Benning is now in charge of all hockey operations and will report directly to the Aquilinis. Hopefully, Benning understands how important and time consuming managing up will be.

Other than a brief statement released through the Canucks, Linden wasn't talking Wednesday night and may not do interviews anytime soon. But his departure probably isn't about one thing, but a lot of things.

These have been a difficult four years. Linden's friends could see the toll the job was taking on him. He didn't seek the job to begin with and didn't need the money.

Still, near as anyone can tell, Linden has never quit anything in his life. So, the intrigue over this monumental change atop the Canucks organization isn't likely to abate.

The strangest part of his departure, whether it was his call or Aquilini's, is that Linden leaves with the worst of the rebuild over. Yes, next season could be bleak again, standings-wise, as the Canucks experience life without Daniel and Henrik Sedin, who were both the heart and conscience of the team right up until their retirement as effective, offensive players last spring.

But Brock Boeser and Bo Horvat are in the Canucks lineup already, and Elias Pettersson, Adam Gaudette and Thatcher Demko could play for them next season. Quinn Hughes may decide to turn pro rather than return to college, and other top prospects like Olli Juolevi, Jonathan Dahlen and Kole Lind will be a phone call away in the American Hockey League.

Things are soon going to be better for the Canucks. But Linden won't be around to see it. At least he won't be seeing it from management's suite.

He'll be home in Kitsilano, with his wife Cristina and their one-year-old son, Roman. And probably a lot happier than he has been the last couple of years, even with his Canucks crown dented by his time as president.

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1102402 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Vancouver Canucks owner Francesco Aquilini thanks Trevor Linden

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA July 25, 2018, 9:52 PM

Moments after the Vancouver Canucks made the surprise announcement that Trevor Linden was leaving the franchise, team owner Francesco Aquilini took to Twitter to send out a personal message.

Linden had spent the past four years serving as the team's president of hockey operations and, although the Canucks didn't fare too well on the ice during that time, the 48-year-old was lauded for the work he's done to rebuild the team on the fly.

"I deeply value everything Trevor has done for this city and this franchise," Aquilini wrote as part of a 12-tweet thread. "He is tremendously popular in Vancouver, and for good reason. I thank him for helping us get to this point, and I wish him nothing but the best in his future endeavours."

In addition to Aquilini praising Linden and announcing that Canucks general manager Jim Benning will now be tasked with heading up the team's hockey operations department, he also took a trip down memory lane.

"I'm a diehard Canucks fan as well as an owner," Aquilini said. "I love this city and this team. An interviewer at a business magazine recently asked me if I had any unfulfilled dreams and I said, 'Just one. I want to bring the Stanley Cup to Vancouver.'"

"I grew up not far from Pacific Coliseum, back when the Canucks played there. I used to park cars in our driveway on game nights. When I was a kid, Lars Lindgren gave me a hockey stick. It was a treasured possession. I still remember the awful feeling when the Canucks lost to the Islanders in 1982. Again in 1994, losing to the Rangers. I remember the crushing Game 7 loss to the Bruins in 2011 like it was yesterday."

He then turned his attention to the fan base and what they can expect moving forward.

"A rebuild is a long, slow, gradual process. Everybody needs to be united behind the same vision and pulling in the same direction," he wrote. "Our fans are incredibly knowledgeable, passionate, and faithful. My goal is to



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reward their loyalty and passion by giving them the joy of watching their team raise the Stanley Cup.

"Following the June draft, we now have the best group of young players and prospects we've had since we acquired the Canucks. The post-Sedin future is starting to take shape. The ownership group has done, and will continue to do, whatever it takes to return the Canucks to the elite of the NHL. I'm confident we are progressing along that road."

While there is still a sense of mystery around why specifically Linden is leaving the team at this time, the fan favourite who also spent 1,140 regular-season games in a Canucks uniform during his playing days was able to express his gratitude.

"This team and this game hold a special place in my life and I leave very optimistic about the direction the Canucks are headed," Linden wrote in his own message that echoed much of what Aquilini said. "Most of all I am excited about the highly skilled group of prospects and young stars that we have assembled. From ownership to hockey and business operations, the club is as strong as its been in years. Above it all, I can feel our fans' sense of hope again and I know the future for the Canucks is very bright.

"I love this city and this province, and I will always have a special relationship with this team and Canucks fans."

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1102403 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / There may be more to Trevor Linden leaving Canucks than meets the eye

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA July 26, 2018, 12:42 AM

The Vancouver Canucks and Trevor Linden announced Wednesday night they had "amicably" agreed to part ways, but no specific reason was given.

After the news broke, Elliotte Friedman joined Sportsnet 650 to discuss the front office shakeup and after making a few calls he suggested Linden and ownership might not have seen eye-to-eye on the direction of the team's current rebuild.

Friedman would go on to explain that one NHL general manager told him that at June's draft in Dallas, Linden had approached several teams that had gone through rebuilds and inquired about their respective processes.

"I think that was his plan. I think he wanted to keep going the same way and I do think there was a recent meeting where I'm not sure the vision was shared, and I think at that point in time it was recognized that it was time for a break," Friedman said. "I think Linden had a plan that he saw as he asked some other teams about how they went through their rebuilds and he presented that and I don't think he felt that the organization wanted to do it the same way."

Canucks owner Francesco Aquilini posted a 12-tweet thread Wednesday night, thanking Linden for all he's done for the Canucks over the years and addressed the team's future.

One of the tweets read: "A rebuild is a long, slow, gradual process. Everybody needs to be united behind the same vision and pulling in the same direction."

Friedman mentioned that tweet in particular raised some eyebrows around the league.

"When that tweet came out — and I know a couple people around the league saw it — they said that's where you should be looking, so I think that's the hint that we're all looking for," Friedman said.

The Canucks, a franchise that has not won a playoff series since advancing to the Stanley Cup Final in 2011, have taken a patient approach to the rebuild.

Young forwards Brock Boeser and Bo Horvat are already thriving at the NHL level and with prospects Elias Pettersson, Jonathan Dahlen, Olli Juolevi, Thatcher Demko and now Quinn Hughes waiting in the pipeline, the Canucks have a stable of promising prospects that fans could soon see in Canucks uniforms. That is perhaps one reason why the team chose not to make a big splash in free agency, instead focussing on adding depth and veteran leadership in the form of Jay Beagle and Antoine Roussel.

Friedman continued: "I can't tell you with 100 per cent, black-and-white certainty, but I think what happened was they had their meeting, Trevor said, 'I think we should do it this way,' there was pushback wherever it came from and they said, 'No,' and ultimately I think ownership decided, 'We could do it this way,' and Trevor said 'I don't support that,' and ownership said 'Well, we're going to do it this way.' ...

"I think it comes down to a point where if you're not going to support it, you don't want to be there, and if you're not going to support it, ownership probably doesn't want you there. So, people can decide what that means but I do think both [sides] looked at each other and said, 'This is not going to work.'"

Linden said in a prepared statement that he plans on enjoying the summer with his family. His future in hockey beyond that is a mystery — as is the timeline of when the Canucks plan to find Linden's replacement.

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1102404 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Flyers' van Riemsdyk talks moving on from Leafs, learning from Babcock

Sonny Sachdeva | @sachdevasonny July 25, 2018, 11:38 PM

As one of the city's franchises takes on a flood of criticism for severing ties with a star contributor without fair warning, another earns praise from a former player for doing precisely the opposite. So it goes in an odd summer that's brought its fair share of free-agency and trade-market chaos for Toronto.

After six years in blue and white, James van Riemsdyk will suit up in 2018-19 for the same club with whom he began his career, the 29-year-old goal-getter having inked a five-year, \$35-million deal with the Philadelphia Flyers on July 1. That move didn't come as much of a shock for the Maple Leafs faithful, as it was long assumed the club would lean on its youth next season, even before John Tavares was brought aboard.

And, as it turns out, van Riemsdyk wasn't caught off-guard by the Leafs' intentions to move on, either.

"They had told me a few weeks before free agency they were going to be going in a different direction," van Riemsdyk said Wednesday during his introduction with his new club. "You appreciate that. I enjoyed my time there. I think it was good for me as a person, good for my career. [I] had a lot of great memories playing there. I always look back fondly on my time there.

"Telling me that beforehand was good because it allows you to assess your situation a little differently in free agency, take some of the emotion



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out of it that might come from having those feelings of being some place for six years, and then you can really start to look at things objectively.”

A sentiment DeMar DeRozan would undoubtedly agree with. After nine seasons in Toronto, the longtime Raptor was recently flipped to San Antonio in the blockbuster deal that sent Kawhi Leonard north. DeRozan has since been outspoken about Raptors president Masai Ujiri’s failure to offer him the respect he’d earned by preparing him for the career-altering move.

His fellow ex-Torontonian had a far different experience, it seems.

“With Toronto, that’s the respect I appreciated from them,” van Riemsdyk said Wednesday.

The five-time 20-goal-scorer, who hit a career-high 36 tallies in 2017-18, brings some much-needed offensive punch to a Flyers club on the cusp of progress. When he does make his on-ice return for the Flyers, he’ll do so with a few new tricks in his bag, courtesy of the time spent learning from the Leafs’ veteran bench boss, Mike Babcock.

“He wanted to be part of a winning team and a winning culture and he was very demanding of his players,” van Riemsdyk told reporters Wednesday. “He was a communicator and you pretty much knew where you stood at all times with him. ... The longer you play, you realize certain details are very important. As a winger, that’s making good plays along the wall in your own end and giving your defencemen time to go back and pick up pucks.

“Little things like that are what make you really reliable. I think that was good to learn from [Babcock]. As a player, it’s nice to learn little tricks like that, that you can use for the rest of your career.”

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1102405 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Vancouver Canucks owner Francesco Aquilini thanks Trevor Linden

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA July 25, 2018, 9:52 PM

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kid, Lars Lindgren gave me a hockey stick. It was a treasured possession. I still remember the awful feeling when the Canucks lost to the Islanders in 1982. Again in 1994, losing to the Rangers. I remember the crushing Game 7 loss to the Bruins in 2011 like it was yesterday.”

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Sportsnet.ca / Iginla, past teammates reflect on former Flame’s legendary career

Sonny Sachdeva | @sachdevasonny July 25, 2018, 8:14 PM

One day down the line, the Calgary Flames faithful will see that familiar No. 12 rise to the rafters of the Scotiabank Saddledome, cementing the legacy of the best to ever don the city’s colours.

It’s the only fitting endpoint to Jarome Iginla’s near-two-decades-long career in Alberta, one that saw the future Hall of Famer carry the Flames from a post-season drought to the Stanley Cup Final. And one that — following a subsequent five-year spin through Pittsburgh, Boston, Colorado and Los Angeles — will come to an end when the 41-year-old announces his retirement at the Saddledome on July 30.

Though it’s been five years since the St. Albert, Alta., native walked the halls of the Saddledome as one of the arena’s own, the homecoming seems an appropriate send-off.

“In a sense, I grew up there,” Iginla told CalgaryFlames.com’s George Johnson on Wednesday. “I started playing for the Flames at 19 but even in minor hockey I remember travelling to Calgary for tournaments, from St. Albert, and I imagined playing in the Saddledome. It’s been a fun adventure for my family and I. Some great cities, great people. To be back in Alberta, though, will feel like home.”



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The veteran sniper posted more than a few milestone moments through his lengthy NHL tenure, establishing himself as the league's quintessential power forward en route to an Art Ross Trophy, two Rocket Richard Trophies and a Lester B. Pearson Award.

But his most memorable stretch in a Flames jersey was undoubtedly the 2004 playoff run that saw Iginla push an unlikely contender to the Final, bowing out just one win shy of a championship (not without a bit of controversy, of course).

"Being so close, that was tough. But it was amazing, too," Iginla told Johnson. "The way the city embraced us. The Red Mile. And each series was so close. Beating Vancouver and then Kipper standing on his head against Detroit. ... For sure, it took me a while to just let it go, losing. From seven years of missing the playoffs to almost winning it. And it does still sting a little bit.

"I've always dreamt of being on a Stanley Cup-winning team. That always stayed with me. I know now that dream isn't coming true."

Though Iginla finishes his career without reaching that Stanley Cup summit, he leaves with a legacy dotted with far more than playoff failures.

"If you said when I started that I was going to play 20 years, experience what I have, I'd have taken it in a heartbeat," Iginla said. "I did the best I could, played as hard as I could. And all my dreams came true, more than I ever could've imagined. Except that one dream. It just wasn't in the cards for me."

The captain's impact on his former franchise's history is undeniable, with none who have come after yet able to rise to become the same type of central, crucial figure in Calgary. Assistant GM Craig Conroy, who logged nine seasons on the Flames roster alongside Iginla, said it wasn't difficult to see what drove the winger's impressive career.

"First of all, the one thing people should know about Jarome — he just loves the game. He's passionate about the game," Conroy told Sportsnet back in February. "We used to go over to his house at Christmas time and he had a little outdoor rink in the back, and we'd be playing one-on-one. Whether we were playing in the NHL or playing in his backyard or playing shinny hockey with our buddies, he just loves the game."

Though the tail end of Iginla's career saw him don a few different jerseys, No. 12's time in the NHL will always be defined by his Flames tenure.

"He's a Calgary Flame to me," Conroy said. "That's what Jarome Iginla is."

Well known for his all-world sniping ability — Iginla's 625 career goals rank 15th-most all time — Conroy said there was far more to his former teammate's skill-set than filling the net.

"He could play the game any way you wanted. When it got hard, he got better. That really seemed to take his game up a level or two," Conroy told Johnson on Wednesday. "Even when there wasn't a lot of hitting, Jarome could get by on finesse. Even though he was classified as a power forward, he could play in any situation.

"He's an all-timer. He's an all-star. He's a Hall of Famer. But he's also a good guy. You want to go to war for him because he is the ultimate good guy."

Added Flames assistant coach Martin Gelinas — who played a key role in that '04 run alongside Iginla — to Johnson:

"You spend a little bit of time with Jarome Iginla and it's a breath of fresh air. I've never heard him say a bad word about anyone. Always positive. Smile on his face. But a true warrior. I can't say enough about the guy.

"The ultimate player."

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1102407 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Jake Virtanen of Vancouver Canucks works with YouTube star Pavel Barber

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA July 25, 2018, 8:38 PM

Jake Virtanen wants to be a top-six forward on the Vancouver Canucks and the young winger is taking some extra steps this off-season to ensure he's in a position to be one in 2018-19.

Virtanen, who signed a two-year, \$2.5-million contract Wednesday, has been working with stickhandling specialist and YouTube sensation Pavel Barber in the hopes it will give him an edge on the competition.

"Honestly, after the second or third time I skated with him I felt a big difference," Virtanen told Sportsnet 650 Wednesday. "He gives me a lot of off-ice drills too that, if I'm just sitting at home with a puck and a ball, I can do a couple drills that he gives me. He's a really good stickhandling coach."

Virtanen was selected sixth overall by the Canucks in 2014 but only has 17 goals and 17 assists through his first 140 NHL games — a far cry from the 85 goals and 161 points he had in 192 games with the WHL's Calgary Hitmen.

Barber, who holds frequent seminars across North America, teaches much more than nifty tricks to try in a shootout or at practice and Virtanen said he appreciates the practicality in that.

"He does a lot of in-game stuff so that's really nice. A lot of protecting the puck drills and stuff like that," Virtanen said. "He's a really good guy. Everyone knows that he's got some pretty sick hands if you've seen his videos on YouTube and Instagram. He's got some really good hands, so it's really nice to learn from him. He's a great mentor for me."

If his improved hands can pay dividends on the ice we could potentially see Virtanen secure a spot on one of Vancouver's top two lines.

"I want to be that guy where my teammates know what they're going to get from me every night," he said. "Being a top-six guy would be ideal and I want to earn that. It's not going to be easy. We've got a really [deep] lineup coming through so I'm excited for when camp comes around and seeing how things play out."

Virtanen managed just 10 goals and 10 assists in 75 games this past season, numbers that don't scream 'top-six forward.'

"I think I haven't done a great job of scoring enough," said Virtanen, who added he thinks improving his two-way game will also result in more chances. "Obviously I know that I can score goals but I just have to go out there and do it. Just get greasy and it doesn't matter how it goes in, as long as it gets in there.

"If you're a good guy in the defensive zone it just transfers over to the offensive zone. If you're getting pucks out I can use my speed to beat defencemen on the forecheck."

The 21-year-old averaged 17.4 shifts and 11:07 of ice-time over his first 55 games but those averages increased to 21.25 shifts and 14:24 in ice-time per game over his final 20 contests thanks to his improved play as the season went along.

"Last season, the last 20 games was a big stepping stone for me and I really showed how I can play," Virtanen said. "But moving forward here, obviously I have a lot to prove still to my teammates and coaching staff. I'm just looking forward to getting into camp. I'm counting down the days. I'm working on my off-season conditioning and I'll be ready to go hard when camp comes."

After spending most of the 2016-17 campaign with the Utica Comets in the AHL, Virtanen said his goal heading into 2017-18 was to enter camp



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with a fresh mind, continue learning how to be an everyday NHLer and take in as much as he could from the Sedins in their final season.

He did that. Now he aims to take the next step.

Bo Horvat leveraged a strong performance in his third full NHL season and cashed in with a six-year, \$33-million contract. Virtanen's cap hit is set at \$1.25 million in each of the next two seasons but if he does fulfill his goals of becoming a better scorer and a regular top-six forward, the next contract he inks could be much more lucrative than the one he signed Wednesday.

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1102408 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Jarome Iginla Q&A: Looking back on my first NHL interview

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjokebox July 25, 2018, 1:42 PM

Fifteen summers ago, when Jarome Iginla and I were both more spry, the Calgary Flames star was gracious enough to grant a hopeful hockey writer a one-on-one interview. The year was 2003, and a 26-year-old Iginla had just returned to Alberta from a weeklong Maui wedding vacation with a new bride and a new respect for surfers.

Though the right winger had already won the Art Ross Trophy (2001-02) and an Olympic gold medal (2002), unbeknownst to anyone, he was months away from leading the Flames all the way to the Stanley Cup Final and sparking Red Mile delirium.

"Jarome Iginla is training hard," a young, fumbling, but totally clairvoyant Luke wrote then. "For since the Anaheim Mighty Ducks came within one game of winning the Stanley Cup last spring after failing to make the NHL playoffs the previous season, the long-rebuilding Calgary Flames have new hope."

As Iginla gets set to announce his retirement, here are some excerpts from that dusty Q&A, which was written for high school students.

Thanks, Jarome, for giving a guy his first interview with a real hockey player and another reason to wear 12.

What high school did you go to?

I grew up here in St. Albert, which is a city just north of Edmonton, and I went to Grade 10 here at Paul Kane High School. But then I went to junior in the WHL, Western Hockey League, at age 16. So I left and went to finish school at Norkam High School in Kamloops for grades 11 and 12. It was tough to leave family and friends, but the hardest part was the playing and juggling the [scant] amount of sleep. We had a lot of bus trips and missed a little bit of school. We had to make that up with tutoring, as a team. I remember getting off the bus after a game the night before and driving through the night, and we literally would get home at 7:30 a.m. We'd just have time to get showered up, and then we'd have to get to school. It was hard. That was an adjustment, for sure. Then we'd have practices every day after school, and I was used to going home after school and sleeping or relaxing.

Did you have to sacrifice other sports?

I did have to sacrifice. In junior high I played team basketball and team volleyball, and it was a great time. In that area, I missed out. Hockey in Canada is pretty much all-year now, especially with practices through the week. There was definitely no time in grades 11 and 12 to do any other sports. That was one downside; I really enjoyed playing other sports. But once I left home to play hockey, it was a commitment to be the best I could be and try to make the NHL.

Who influenced you then?

Growing up, my family has always been totally supportive. My grandpa helped out a lot. My parents divorced when I was younger — I was one or two years old — so ever since I can remember, they've always been apart. It's been good, but my dad was busy going to school, and my mom had to work a lot to support my sports. She went to as many games as she could — she didn't make a lot — but both my grandparents helped me get to practice and took me to power skating right after school when my mom and dad were busy. So it was great to have somebody in the stands supporting me. What I appreciate most, looking back, is that they never judged my play. I kinda knew when I had a bad game, or the coach would let me know, but they were just there to enjoy it. Good or bad, they never had a negative thing to say.

Do any games stick out in your mind from your childhood?

Today, some of the best friends I have are people I got the chance to play with growing up in minor hockey and going to school. So we relive the junior-high basketball game that we lost by one point in the city finals, or the provincials in hockey that we won. Hockey is enjoyable to play now, and I'm very thankful to play it, but some of the best times were growing up, those road trips and the hotels in minor hockey.

As a kid, did you experience racism at the rink?

Once, I was playing and I overheard some commotion in the stands. And afterwards I heard that one of the other parents had said something [racially negative] about me, and one of our parents had went over and had a discussion with that guy, whoever had said it. Obviously, it doesn't feel good. It's wrong that that other parent is saying that. But it felt good to know that our fans, my friends' parents, are sticking up for me. So there was good from it. But I never felt that I had any racial problems on my own team, or with coaching. I don't feel like I ever missed ice time or ever got cut from a team [because I'm black]. But going to different places, there were some minor instances.

Since there are still only a few black players in the NHL, do you attract not only the Calgary Flame fan but the black fan as well?

There weren't many black players when I was growing up, and I remember playing and looking up to the ones that were playing. Kids would say, "There aren't any black players in the NHL." And I would say, "Well, yeah, there are." There was Grant Fuhr in Edmonton. I remember being a fan of Claude Vilgrain in New Jersey. Tony McKegney. And it meant a lot to me to be able to say there are, to say that it was possible. There are definitely more black players in the NHL today, and I know what it meant to me to look up and see that it was possible. So I'd love to be a role model to other young black kids. And if there's people cheering for me, great.

What was running through your mind as you laced up your skates for that first step on NHL ice?

It was so different. My first game was a playoff game that I played with Calgary, seven or eight years ago now. We had just got eliminated [from the playoffs] in junior, and I got called up. A couple nights before, I was watching the NHL playoffs on TV, watching to see how Calgary is doing and watching Theron Fleury. They're playing [the Blackhawks' Chris] Chelios and Eddie Belfour. And then to be lacing up and being with these guys. In one night it changes. And now I'm shooting on Eddie Belfour, and going down on Chelios, and playing on a line with Theron Fleury — it was unbelievable. I'll never forget that. It happened so quick. It was different; it was an adjustment my whole first year, going from guys that I'm huge fans of the year before — scouts are asking who your favourite player is, and you're arguing with your [junior] teammates over who the best players are in the NHL. It was an adjustment to compete against them without being in awe.

Is there an image that sticks out in your mind from the Olympic gold medal game?

The final game, the whole thing. Just how loud the crowd was, how intense every shift was. We just wanted to win so bad; we were so close



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to that gold medal. Just the electricity in the building, it was unreal. Every emotion: from nervousness to excitement to get on the ice. Then as soon as I was on the bench, I was a fan, pulling for [Mario] Lemieux or whoever was on. Then, all of a sudden, it would be my shift again. So you gotta go as hard as you could, get off, and then I was a fan [again]. I think the best moment was the last couple minutes. The whole game, with all those emotions — the nervous excitement, the [shots that hit the] posts, things like that that went on in the game — I never had a chance to think about whether we would win or not. I didn't want to think about that, until the final couple minutes when it was apparent we were actually going to win. Being up by a couple goals, it was a pretty cool feeling. It's hard to explain. But that was the most intense competition I've ever been in, by far. By far.

What is your biggest challenge right now?

To be part of a playoff team, to help the Calgary Flames get to the playoffs, without a doubt. That's why we play. You want to win the Stanley Cup, but in order to do that, you gotta make the playoffs. Seven years out. Every year it's gotten harder and harder to be out and watching. Hopefully this is our year. That's definitely the No. 1 challenge and goal.

What are you most proud of?

One of my proudest moments was playing my first NHL game. It was something that I'd always dreamed of. In grade 7, when teachers used to go around and ask all the students what they wanted to be, I always wanted to be a hockey player. I never really thought of the odds — one in 1,000 or whatever it is. I just really enjoyed it and at 16 made the commitment to go to the WHL in Kamloops. Playing and being able to reach my dream, I'm very blessed.

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Sportsnet.ca / NHL stars take turns chirping Jamie Benn, worst tape jobs in hockey

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA July 25, 2018, 8:30 AM

The art of taping a twig is serious business. Some take it more seriously than others, like our pal Marc Savard, but every hockey player has a certain way they like to do it.

Most players keep it simple and go heel to toe with their choice of black or white tape, although Mark Scheifele takes the opposite route and goes toe to heel. Some go unnoticed like black tape on a black blade, while others are eye-catching...just not always for the right reasons.

A select group of NHL stars were recently asked about their tape job techniques and rituals and when asked who has the worst tape job in the NHL, Patrik Laine, Nick Bjugstad, Andreas Athanasiou, Josh Ho-Sang, Kevin Fiala and Artemi Panarin were among those who received votes.

Boston Bruins star David Pastrnak got a couple mentions, too, with Shayne Gostisbehere describing it as the weirdest tape job he's ever seen and Pastrnak's own goalie Tuukka Rask saying in a video the NHL posted Tuesday that "it looks like a two-year-old tapes his stick."

No player was chirped more than Jamie Benn though.

"Mine's probably the best in the league," the Dallas Stars captain said with a smirk, knowing how many feel about his tape job.

Here's a sampling of the reviews Benn's stick got from his peers.

Tyler Seguin: "There's no tape on it and he has to re-tape it every two shifts."

T.J. Oshie: "I don't know how he plays hockey."

Vladimir Tarasenko: "I don't know how you can tape the middle of the stick and play."

Jordan Eberle: "It's kinda gross. I don't know if he still does it but I think it's just one piece of tape isn't it? Two pieces? It's...I don't know how he plays with it."

Patrick Kane: "I guess that's what [Eric] Lindros used to do back in the day but it just looks bad with the black blade. I guess it works for him but I'd say it's pretty ugly."

Is it really that bad? Judge for yourself.

"It's so unique," Benn said with a smile. "I'm like a unicorn tape job. It takes a lot of skill to use this baby."

Benn has 596 points in 667 career NHL games, plus an Art Ross Trophy, two first-team all-star selections and an Olympic gold medal to his name, so his tape job seems to be working for him just fine.

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